

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Miami Laboratory
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

April 11, 2006

TO: Dr. Lance Garrison,
Protected Resources Branch

FROM: Dennis Lee,
SEFSC Observer Coordinator

SUBJECT: Longline gear Incidental Take summary for quarter 1, 2006.

The Miami Laboratory Pelagic Observer Program (POP) is providing you with a summary report of the incidental take of marine mammals, turtles, and birds that have been recorded by observers aboard longline vessels for January 1 to March 31, 2006. The POP completed an overall coverage rate of 6.3% of the selected pelagic longline fleet for this quarter (Table 1). During the quarter, observers recorded seven (7) marine mammals (7-Pilot Whales-alive) and no (0) seabirds, in addition to 9 sea turtles (6-leatherbacks-alive; 3-loggerheads-alive).

Enclosed you will find the original Incidental Take (IT) forms and photocopies of the Haul logs for those animals associated with the regular longline coverage. The POP will maintain copies of the IT logs in our files until you have completed your data review or entry. I strongly recommend that you return the original IT forms with any changes (in red and initialed) to the POP staff when you have completed your review.

In closing, in addition to the POP reporting of Protected Resource (PR) species recorded during observed longline fishing, observers have been requested to inspect the turtle handling and dehooking gear available aboard the vessels as a requirement of the 2004 Biological Opinion (BO). Since you are the point-of-contact (POC) person overseeing the Miami BO tasking, I am providing you with copies of the Miami PR Turtle Gear check list forms either filled out by the observer or by POP staff during debriefing from quarter 1. A PDF file will be created and will be posted on the SEFSC-POP secured website. Although it is not clear how this information will be processed, the originals will remain on file in the observer office, room 314. Analyses associated with Turtle Take Estimates (TTE) or the Net Mortality Ratio (NMR) mentioned in the 2004 BO are not provided as the POP staffing does not have the expertise to provide these results. Finally, the POP observers recorded no sawfish catches during the quarter; this species is not likely to occur in the pelagic environment.

Attachments

Table of Incidental Take summary for first quarter of 2006 by geographical area and effort (sets and hook count) observed; original Incidental Take logs for regular longline coverage; photocopy of the Haul log associated with the take; and photocopies of the Turtle Gear check list forms.

cc: POP office files;
Gerry Scott, Jim Bohnsack (cover letters only).

Table 1: Percent coverage (by sets),the incidental take of Protected Resource species (turtles, mammals, seabirds), and hook effort summarized by geographical area for January 1 -March 31, 2006. (A=Alive, D=Dead, LB=Leatherback, LH=Loggerhead, U=unknown).

| AREA | REQUIRED | | TURTLES | | | | MAMMALS | | BIRDS | |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------|---------|---|---------|--|---------|---|-------|---|
| | TOTAL SETS OBSERVED | 8% COVERAGE | A | D | LB/LH/U | | A | D | A | D |
| CAR-1 | 0(0%) | 11 | 0/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GOM-2 | 54(4%) | 100 | 1/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FEC-3 | 9(3%) | 23 | 1/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SAB-4 | 11(8%) | 0 | 3/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MAB-5 | 21(15%) | 11 | 0/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SAR-8 | 16(8%) | 0 | 1/ 2/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NCA-9 | 0(0%) | 9 | 0/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TUN-10 | 10(8%) | 0 | 0/ 0/ 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 121(6+%) | 154 | 6/ 3/ 0 | 0 | | | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Hook effort Summary:

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Hook effort</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|
| GOM | 39,320 |
| FEC | 8,450 |
| SAB | 7,591 |
| MAB | 10,278 |
| SAR | 14,876 |
| TUN | 4,105 |
| TOTAL | 86,620 |